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**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923**

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September 22, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Majority Leader
H-107, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
House Majority Whip
H-329, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, and Majority Whip Clyburn:

I write to bring to your attention an urgent matter that requires immediate consideration. Our nation's AIDS Drug Assistance Programs (ADAPs) are experiencing a funding crisis. With the uninsured rate at a record high due to the difficult economy; a growing number of individuals living with HIV/AIDS who rely on state ADAPs for access to treatment and other services; stagnant federal funding; and state budget cuts; thousands of Americans are counting on Congress to adequately and appropriately fund state ADAPs and thereby ensure that they have reliable access to the medications they need to stay alive.

As you know, state ADAPs are funded through the Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program, which was established in 1990 to help provide health care services to some of our nation's most vulnerable citizens. It currently serves more than half a million low-income people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States, many of whom are uninsured and the majority of whom are underinsured. However, due to a federal funding shortfall, state budget cuts, and an increase in the number of individuals who rely on state ADAPs for HIV-related medications, nine states, including Florida, have had to create ADAP waiting lists and cut services by reducing eligibility criteria, changing formularies, and closing enrollment.

Furthermore, many other states have established various cost containment measures, which include dropping current beneficiaries from their programs and removing mental health drugs and medications for co-occurring conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. This poses a significant challenge to people living with HIV/AIDS who rely on state ADAPs to access mental health drugs, as well as threatens adherence to their current regimens.

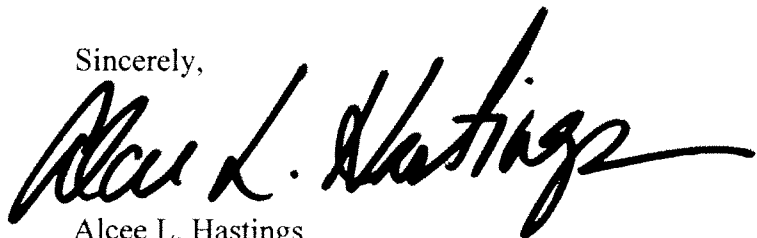
To make matters worse, according to recent data released by the Census Bureau, the number of uninsured Americans rose sharply last year to an all-time high of 50.7 million due to the difficult economy. It is projected that tens of thousands more individuals will soon require the vital services that state ADAPs provide. This issue hits close to home. Currently, of the 3,214 individuals on ADAP waiting lists, Florida has 1,712 of them. That is, 53 percent of the poorest people in our nation who are waiting for AIDS medications are living in one state.

This is outrageous, especially given that the actual number of individuals requiring access to care nationwide is much higher. The actual number of people not receiving care and ineligible for ADAPs is unknown. States that have reduced their eligibility requirements may have decreased their waiting lists, but states are not tracking how many individuals are now ineligible.

It is clear that Congress must do more and work together with states and communities to address this national crisis. While President Obama has provided \$25 million to states that have been hit hardest, this is simply not enough. Congress must increase its commitment to state ADAPs while continuing to fund other AIDS programs. This problem is not going away; we need a long-term solution to ensure that these individuals have access to the care they need until the *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* takes full effect in 2014.

Madam Speaker, Majority Leader Hoyer, and Majority Whip Clyburn, it is my sincere hope that Congress will take swift and meaningful action to ensure that low-income, uninsured, and underinsured people living with AIDS have access to their lifesaving and sustaining medications. To that end, I urge you to bring an emergency supplemental of \$25 million to the floor for a vote as soon as possible before the General Election on November 2, 2010, to provide relief to state ADAPs. I appreciate your support and look forward to working together with you to pass this crucial legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress